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Shawano-Gresham School District

Richard G. Hess, Ph.D.
Superintendent

William V. Matthias
Assistant Superintendent

March 31, 1997

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APR 1 1 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

REED HUNT
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
1919 M STREET N W ROOM 814
WASHINGTON D C 20554

Dear Commissioner Hunt:

As I am sure you are aware, school districts across the country are accessing the Internet in order to provide information to our students. In the Shawano-Gresham School District, this access begins as early as elementary school. In order for our students to compete in our global society and the information age, the access to information and the ability to use that information is rapidly becoming a basic skill.

Your commission is currently reviewing the Telecommunications Act and the Federal-State Joint Board's discount plan that will guarantee that schools will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet and provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.2 billion dollars a year will address the needs of our students into the future. Without discounts for Internet access school districts will not be able to afford to provide these basic skills for our children.

The Shawano-Gresham School District is currently implementing a strategic plan with technology as a vital component. We have spent close to \$1 million dollars to implement our plan to date. We are however, with revenue caps on our budgets, limited in our ability to pay for access to information that is not affordable.

Our students need telecommunication services this year and I urge the Federal Communications Commission to support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal services for schools and libraries.

Sincerely,

Richard Hess, Ph.D.
District Administrator

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The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M St. NW, Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20054

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Hundt

I write in support of meaningful discounts on telecommunications services for schools and libraries so that every school child and life - long learner can have access to the world of information technology. The Telecommunication Act, through its Universal Service Fund provisions, mandates the development of special discount rates for all schools and libraries so that they can service at affordable prices.

There is no doubt that advanced telecommunications services are important to improving learning, sparking the imagination and leveling the playing field for all of our nation's people. Affordable access to technology in all classrooms and libraries will assure that our children and life - long learners can connect with the technology they would need to compete in today's and tomorrow's workforce. Advanced telecommunications services in the classroom will also create informed and skilled consumers of new technology well into the 21st century.

Last November, the Federal - State Joint Board on Universal Services sent to the Federal Communications Commission a set of recommendations for implementing the Universal Service Fund provisions related to schools and libraries. These recommendations would give our learning institutions significant discounts on all services that are commercially available, with deeper discounts for those schools and libraries least able to pay and more expensive to service. All schools would get discounts on connections to classrooms and Internet connectivity, both of which are essential to providing the most advanced learning opportunities to the greatest number of students.

We urge your support for the Joint Boards recommendations. Taken as a whole, they will provide affordable discounts for a full range of services, and give schools and libraries flexibility in choosing the services needed to meet each community's diverse needs. Most importantly, these provisions, if adopted by the FCC, will make advanced technology for learning available to all Americans.

Sincerely,

Reed M. Hundt
24 State

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